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ABSTRACT

During winter semester 1989, Monroe County Community College (MCCC) developed a Writing Fellows program and introduced a Writing Center into the Learning Assistance Lab (LAL). Both these iniatives were part of the school's writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) efforts which had been launched in fall 1987. Writing Fellows are specially-trained peer tutors who work with all students in courses involved with WAC, which include among others, classes in physics, nursing, music, chemistry, logic, algebra and drafting. This annual report of MCCC's WAC program describes the background to and goals of the program, presents frequency use data for the LAL, and provides results of an evaluative survey of students, faculty and student tutors involved in the program. Survey results include the following: (1) while MCCC enrollments decreased from fall 1989 to winter 1990, use of the LAL increased dramatically from 2,481 to 2,896 student visits; (2) total tutoring sessions per year at the LAL increased from 609 in 1986 to 1,937 in 1990; (3) in 1990, 84% of students who could arrange conferences with their Writing Fellows felt that the conferences were helpful or very helpful, up from 76% in 1989; (4) 91% of students surveyed in 1990 believed the program was either effective or very effective as compared with 78% in the 1989 survey; (5) all 18 faculty involved in the WAC program wished to continue having Writing Fellows assigned to their courses; and (6) all Writing Fellows who intended to return to MCCC in fall 1991 volunteered to continue their work as Writing Fellows. Sample narrative survey responses, copies of six issues of the WAC program newsletter, and a copy of a short article on the program are included. (JMC)

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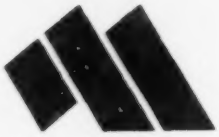

Monroe County Community College

Writing Across the Curriculum

Annual Report

1989 - 90

Comprehensive Report

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Compiled and Written
by
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Humanities/Social Sciences Division

Submitted:
4 June 1990

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Monroe County Community College
WAC Annual Report 1989-90

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"Writing Across the Curriculum: Thinking Made Visible"

Monroe County Community College's WAC Program Annual Report

by
Dr. John Holladay

"Writing across the curriculum is one of the most complex pedagogical and curricular reforms that has occurred in the American universities in the past twenty years. Its evaluation needs to be similarly complex and comprehensive. . . . Such evaluations don't always produce neat bar graphs or statistical reports."
(Tori Haring-Smith / Professor, Brown University / 23 March 1990 / Chicago / Conference on College Composition and Communication: "Evaluating WAC Programs")

Our Evaluation:

I am encouraged by Tori Haring-Smith's comments. I believe we have put together a complex and comprehensive report. But, as she says, this topic is not easily reduced to statistics and bar graphs. To be sure, where possible, we have gathered statistics and presented them as clearly as possible. But the impact of this program goes beyond numbers. When students and faculty work together to improve thinking, writing, and communication skills, what takes place is very personal: and our Writing Fellows provide a personal response at the most appropriate time--while the paper is still being written. As you will see if you study the results of our end-of-the-semester surveys and read the anecdotal responses of students and faculty, we have changed the way some faculty and students think about writing. Students are interacting with each other with respect to writing--and in positive ways, not the usual commiseration.

These changes did not occur overnight, and our work is far from complete. But a solid foundation exists. I am optimistic about our future.

Background:

MCCC's writing-across-the-curriculum activities began three years ago when we established a committee made up of faculty members from each division on campus. During the fall of '87 and the winter of '88, this committee worked to establish a WAC program that would endure because it served the needs of faculty and students. In the spring of '88 we had our first WAC workshop: a two-day session led by MSU Professor Michael Steinberg.

In the fall of '88 we had several workshops conducted by and for our own faculty, and we began the WAC newsletter which continues to publish three times each semester. During the winter semester of '89, MCCC started the Writing Fellows program and introduced a Writing Center into the Learning Assistance Lab.

The material gathered for this report clearly demonstrates that Monroe County Community College has an active and productive writing-across-the-curriculum program. A lot of research and careful preparation have already gone into the establishment of this program. Many dedicated and hard working faculty and students are now involved in its success. Its future will depend on the continued commitment of administrators, faculty, and students of MCCC.

WAC Goals:

Tori Haring-Smith, WAC consultant and founder of Brown University's WAC program, also suggests in the paper listed at the beginning of this report that when WAC programs first appeared in the late '70s, **they began with basically two goals: 1) shared responsibility, and 2) the use of writing as a tool for learning.**

"We wanted to demonstrate through these programs that **writing is a concern for all faculty in all disciplines, and, therefore, it is a shared responsibiility of the faculty as a whole**. That was the primary concern when we set up WAC programs." Concerning the second goal, the use of writing as a tool for learning, Haring-Smith says this: **"Writing should be seen as thinking made visible. Students should be engaged in revision--which goes far beyond editing."**

MCCC's efforts are addressing both of the issues identified by Haring-Smith. **Has WAC become a shared responsibility among our faculty? Absolutely, but we have gone one step farther--we have made it a shared responsibility of faculty and students.** Both are committed to improving the quality of writing and thinking in a wide variety of courses across the curriculum.

During the period covered in this report (Fall '89 and Winter '90), Writing Fellows have conducted over 1,500 individualized tutoring sessions--most in the Writing Center but many others in whatever location could be found when the LAL was not open.

The variety of classes involved has been encouraging--many are in areas that even a few years ago were not often thought to involve writing: Physics, Music, Nursing, Chemistry, Logic, Automotive Technology, Alegbra and Trigonometry, Drafting, and Earth Science--to name only a few.

Concerning the goal of shared responsibility, our efforts have been on target. Last semester (Winter '90) we had nineteen faculty members working with thirty-five Writing Fellows in twenty-five courses. These Writing Fellows worked with over five hundred students in the classes to which they were assigned, and they also spent seventy hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL--where they were available to help students from every course on campus.

To be sure, many faculty are not yet involved--and some never will be. But, unlike many campuses where interest in WAC starts on a high note and gradually diminishes, each semester we have had a few more faculty members become involved with WAC. (I might also add that I have already received an even wider range of requests for Writing Fellows next fall--more than we will be able to supply. Nevertheless, those who will not have a Writing Fellow assigned to their class will still be able to send students to work with Writing Fellows in the Writing Center.)

The second goal of WAC is to encourage the use of writing as a learning tool. Concerning this goal, Haring-Smith says: "Students should be engaged in revision--which goes far beyond editing." Clearly, our students are doing more revision and more thoughtful revision than ever before. In the classes to which Writing Fellows are assigned, every major writing assignment must go through at least two drafts: the first draft is reviewed by the Writing Fellow, who then discusses it with the student. It is then attached to a second draft--both of which are submitted to the professor.

Making clear the difference between revision and editing is one of the most difficult tasks faced by anyone trying to operate a Writing Center. In the past, most students, if they went to the LAL at all, were looking for a quick fix, an editor who would correct the mechanical and grammatical mistakes. In fact, even administrators and faculty often think of Writing Centers as places for remedial work--developmental centers for poor writers. **We are working to change that perception. Our Writing Fellows work with every student in class to demonstrate that revision is an integral part of writing for all writers, and it is not a punishment meted out to poor writers.**

The focus in our Writing Center and in the training of our Writing Fellows is on revision: thinking about and trying to correct high-order problems first--following the assignment carefully, demonstrating thoroughness and clarity of thought, providing accurate, adequate, and appropriate support for one's conclusions. Only after these issues have been addressed does the Writing Fellow begin to deal with issues of editing. As a result, more critical thinking is taking place on every formal writing assignment.

Questions about WAC at MCCC:

Who benefits from this approach? STUDENTS BENEFIT.
We must not underestimate the intelligence and insight of our students.
The students benefit, and they know they do. **(See their responses on pages 10-17.)**
Students benefit from receiving guidance, encouragement, and positive feedback when it matters most to them--before their work is submitted for a grade.
Students benefit from the personal contact, from the assurance that help is available, that someone does care and will take the time to work with them. This is especially critical to those who are being asked to write their first paper in the disciplines. Some have not yet even had their first composition class, and they don't know where to begin. Help for these students has not always been available, and they are extremely grateful for the guidance they receive.
Students benefit from being required to get on task sooner. They are not permitted to wait until the last possible minute to begin the major writing assignments. Even though a few find this irksome, the overwhelming majority realize the need to organize their time more efficiently. They also perceive the faculty member as being more organized. If the faculty member has laid the groundwork carefully, working with the Writing Fellows becomes one more good thing about a good class and a good learning experience.

FACULTY BENEFIT. Faculty appreciate the results of working with Writing Fellows. **(See their comments on pages 18-20.)**
Faculty working with Writing Fellows no longer have to read and grade first drafts hurriedly thrown together at the last minute. Faculty appreciate the fact that their students are on task sooner.
Faculty often admit this has required more of them. They must define their expectations more clearly. They must establish better time lines for first and second drafts. Yet the improved quality of student work makes the extra effort worthwhile.
The finished papers are easier to read and grade. Faculty feel less need to teach writing and can concentrate more on subject matter.

WRITING FELLOWS BENEFIT.

Since we learn best what we must teach to someone else, the Writing Fellows benefit more than anyone. They improve their own writing and their interpersonal communication skills.
They learn to deal with all sorts of people and all sorts of problems.
They are proud and gratified when students respond positively to their guidance. They also learn when then they have to deal with the occasional student who is reluctant to write or revise.
They have a position of honor among students and faculty.
They appreciate the opportunity to work closely with faculty.
Writing Fellows benefit from the opportunity to take a number of papers home and read and write written responses before meeting to discuss the papers. On other campuses with writing centers, the tutors usually have to read and respond immediately. They have less time to prepare a considered response.
Writing Fellows have much more training than most writing center tutors. Each Writing Fellow must complete 254 Advanced Composition--where they read several books about writing and the tutoring of writing, and where they have the opportunity to practice their tutoring skills.
Thus, quality and quantity are served by this approach: the quality of training is improved, and the quantity of students served has grown rapidly because it is now a required part of many classes.

General Observations on MCCC's WAC Program:

Faculty and students are aware of WAC on our campus. Unlike many campuses, three years has not diminished the importance of WAC on this campus. Because of the Writing Fellows, the Writing Center, the WAC newsletter, and faculty luncheons where we discuss these issues, writing-across-the-curriculum is not a "buzz word" that has come and gone. Writing-to-learn is now a part of how many of us teach.

Though we are not there yet, we are a lot closer to the day when students cannot help but perceive that writing is spread across the curriculum and is inescapable. More writing, more revising, and more critical thinking are now taking place in courses across the curriculum. Quantity and quality are both being served by MCCC's WAC program. With the continued support of faculty, students, and administrators, WAC will play an ever increasing role in learning at Monroe County Community College.

LAL Frequency Use Data / Winter 1986--Winter 1990

Winter 1986 MCCC Enrollment 2,539
Total LAL Visits = 907
Total Tutor Sessions = 609

Fall 1986 MCCC Enrollment 2,992
Total LAL Visits = 759
Total Tutor Sessions = 475

Winter 1987 MCCC Enrollment 2,739
Total LAL Visits = 970
Total Tutor Sessions = 526

Fall 1987 MCCC Enrollment 3,120
Total LAL Visits = 1531
Total Tutor Sessions = 830

Winter 1988 MCCC Enrollment 2,770
Total LAL Visits = 1414
Total Tutor Sessions = 873

Fall 1988 MCCC Enrollment 3,118
Total LAL Visits = 2029
Total Tutor Sessions 938

Winter 1989 MCCC Enrollment 2,843
Total LAL Visits = 2234
Total Tutor Sessions = 1244 (Writing Center = 475)

Fall 1989 MCCC Enrollment 3,261
Total LAL Visits = 2481
Total Tutor Sessions = 1434 (Writing Center = 563)

Winter 1990 MCCC Enrollment 2,950
Total LAL Visits = 2896
Total Tutor Sessions = 1937 (Writing Center = 927)

The chart of the preceding page reveals that even though MCCC enrollment has not grown dramatically in the past four years, **student use of the LAL has increased dramatically.**

For example, MCCC **enrollment for the fall semester of 1986 was 2,992**. The LAL was beginning its third year of operation.
Total LAL visits that semester were **759**.
Tutor sessions were **475**.

During the most recent semester, **winter 1990, MCCC enrollment was actually lower than in the fall of 1986: 2,950.**
Nevertheless, even with forty-two fewer students attending MCCC than during the fall of 1986, **total LAL visits** during the winter 1990 semester were **up nearly 382 percent--2896 visits (compared to 759 in 1986).**

The **total tutor sessions** during the winter 1990 semester were **also up dramatically: 408 percent--1,937 tutor sessions (compared to 475 in 1986).**
In fact, we had more Writing Center tutor sessions last semester (927) than the total LAL visits (759) during the fall of 1986.

As recently as the fall semester of 1988**--the semester before the introduction of the Writing Center in the LAL--total tutor sessions were 938.** Only three semesters later, winter 1990, **with 168 fewer students on campus than in the fall of 1988, the entire LAL had almost 1,000 more tutor sessions: 1,937**.

That is impressive growth in less than five years.

A number of factors have no doubt contributed to this rapid growth. Clearly one very important factor is the introduction of The Writing Center and Writing Fellows in the winter semester 1989.

For a more detailed analysis of this information and of our end-of -the-semester evaluations by faculty and student-writers, please examine the data on the following pages.

Monroe County Community College
Fall 1989 and Winter 1990
Writing Fellows Program Survey

Part One: Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab

The addition of the Writing Fellows has had a significant impact on activity in the LAL during the past three semesters.

During the winter semester of 1988 and the fall of 1988, **the two semester before Writing Fellows created the Writing Center in the LAL**, student visits to the LAL totaled **3,381** (Winter '88 = **1352** / Fall '88 = **2029**).

During the winter semester of 1989 and the fall of 1989, **the first two semesters of the Writing Fellows presence in the Writing Center in the LAL,** students visits to the LAL totaled **4,840** (Winter '89 = **2359** / Fall '90 = **2481**).

These are some revealing numbers. They are especially revealing when you consider the fact that our student population has not grown significantly for several years. **During two semesters when our enrollment had very little growth, use of the LAL grew by 1459 students--an increase of over 43%.**

If we compare the latest semester, winter 1990, to the winter of 1988, we see an even more remarkable growth. Student visits to the LAL during the **winter of 1988 totaled 1352**. Student visits to the LAL during **the winter of 1990 totaled 2896**. That means that **LAL use this winter was 114% greater than two winters ago.**

The Writing Center cannot claim credit for all of this growth, but the arrival of the Writing Fellows and rapid growth of the LAL are clearly related.

Prior to the use of Writing Fellows, LAL tutors only infrequently worked with writing. It was not even a category on their frequency charts. Consider the change that has occurred in the past three semesters.

These are the **total student visits to the Writing Center in the LAL** during the three semesters it has been in operation:

Winter 1989 = 475 / Fall 1989 = 563 / Winter 1990 = 927

As you can see, **in an area where we did almost no tutoring three years ago, we had 927 sessions this winter.**

Consider also the training of the writing tutors. Two years ago, if students did tutor other students' writing in the LAL, the tutors had almost no special training in this very difficult task. This is no longer the case. All of the tutors in the Writing Center are now taking or have completed a one semester course which prepares them to do this job and to do it well--254 Advanced Composition.

The winter 1990 semester also saw a new outreach to our Writing Center. Two Writing Fellows made themselves available for tutoring at the South Center in Bedford, and they recorded sixteen tutoring sessions. This is small but significant service to students at the South Center--and one greatly appreciated by those who took advantage of the service.

The Writing Center will almost certainly continue to have a positive influence on LAL use. Students in courses which require the use of Writing Fellows will most often meet with their Writing Fellow in the LAL. As they do this, these students are discovering how much they can benefit from the LAL's services. For these students, the LAL is no longer a mysterious and misunderstood place. Many of these students will return for help with other courses.

We should also note that even though the LAL frequency use data shows that the Writing Fellows held a remarkable 927 sessions in only 15 weeks, these were not all the sessions they held. Since the LAL is very often closed when students needed to hold sessions, a significant number of sessions were held in the library, the halls, the cafeteria, and the parking lots. A few students even went to the Writing Fellows' homes to have their sessions. In addition, several students who could not find a suitable time or place to meet with their Writing Fellows held conferences over the phone.

In short, the Writing Fellows are a very dedicated and flexible group of students. **They know their work is important, and they find ways to get the job done**. Read on and you will see how their fellow students evaluate the performance of the Writing Fellows.

Part Two: Evaluation of the Program by Students Who Worked with Writing Fellows: Winter 1990

During the winter semester 1990, twenty-five MCCC classes (up from twenty-one classes in the winter of 1989) in a variety of disciplines had Writing Fellows assigned to assist their fellow students with all major writing assignments. At the end of the semester, students in twenty-four of these classes completed a survey designed to evaluate their experiences with the Writing Fellows.

Evaluations were completed by 364 students in these 24 classes. Not all students who worked with Writing Fellows were in class on the days the evaluations were distributed, and some students did not respond in all categories. Nevertheless, this is a very large and representative sample of those who worked with Writing Fellows during the winter 1990 semester. The results are listed below.

1) How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

Last winter ('89) an encouraging **76%** of the students responded in the top two categories: very helpful and helpful. This winter ('90) an even more encouraging **88%** of the students responded in the top two categories.

47%	**Very Helpful**	**(172 of 364)**
41%	**Helpful**	**(147 of 364)**
11%	**Marginally Helpful**	**(41 of 364)**
1%	**Not Helpful**	**(4 of 364)**

2) How helpful were your conferences with Writing Fellows?

(A higher percentage of students managed to attend conferences this winter. In the winter of '89, 227 of 254 students attended conferences. This winter, 360 of the 364 students who filled out the questionnaire said they attended conferences.)

We are encouraged to learn that **84%** of the students who could arrange conferences with their Writing Fellows felt the conferences were helpful or very helpful--up from **76%** in the winter '89 semester.

43%	**Very Helpful**	**(157 of 360)**
41%	**Helpful**	**(146 of 360)**
13%	**Marginally Helpful**	**(47 of 360)**
3%	**Not Helpful**	**(10 of 360)**

3) **Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked.**

In the winter '89 semester, **79%** of the students in classes with Writing Fellows found the work of their Writing Fellows to be effective or very effective.
This year, the winter '90 semester, **88%** of the students in classes with Writing Fellows found the work of their Writing Fellows to be effective **(36%)** or very effective **(52%)**.

Although we will work for an even higher rating, these numbers clearly demonstrate a very strong endorsement of the Writing Fellows' efforts.

52%	**Very Effective**	**(183 of 355)**
36%	**Effective**	**(127 of 355)**
11%	**Marginally Effective**	**(41 of 355)**
1%	**Unsatisfactory**	**(4 of 355)**

4) **Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows in general).**

This is the most favorable response of all. For the first time, the effective and very effective ratings combine for a better than **90%** approval. Last year's response was good **(78%)**, but we are quite pleased to know that **91%** of our students believe our program is effective **(42%)** or very effective **(49%)**.
The biggest improvement over last year was in the highest category. Last year **28%** of our students gave the program an overall rating of very effective. This year, that same category received a **49%** approval rating.

49%	**Very Effective**	**(172 of 355)**
42%	**Effective**	**(150 of 355)**
9%	**Marginally Useful**	**(32 of 355)**
0%	**Unsatisfactory**	**(1 of 355)**

Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program
Fall 1989

During the fall semester 1989, thirteen MCCC classes had Writing Fellows assigned to assist their fellow students with all major writing assignments. At the end of the semester, students in these classes completed a survey designed to evaluate their experiences with the Writing Fellows. Eleven of the thirteen classes filled out the survey. The results are listed below.

1) How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

41%	**Very Helpful**	**(67 of 165)**
46%	**Helpful**	**(76 of 165)**
13%	**Marginally Helpful**	**(21 of 165)**
less than 1%	**Not Helpful**	**(1 of 165)**

2) How helpful were your conferences with Writing Fellows?

(A few were unable to arrange conferences and had to rely on written comments.)

42%	**Very Helpful**	**(61 of 148)**
45%	**Helpful**	**(67 of 148)**
13%	**Marginally Helpful**	**(19 of 148)**
less than 1%	**Not Helpful**	**(1 of 148)**

3) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked.

43%	Very Helpful	(70 of 161)
47%	Helpful	(76 of 161)
9%	Marginally Helpful	(14 of 161)
less than 1%	Not Helpful	(1 of 161)

4) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows in general).

40%	Very Helpful	(62 of 157)
53%	Helpful	(83 of 157)
7%	Marginally Helpful	(11 of 157)
less than 1%	Not Helpful	(1 of 157)

Writing Fellow Evaluations:
A Sample of Student Responses

"I never would have seen a Fellow if it would not have been required because I have a hard time asking for help. However, I found that my papers were dramatically improved because of the helpful Writing Fellows."

"I have been here for a few years and was honestly afraid to go to the LAL, but now I tell everyone that the LAL is gold. My Writing Fellow sat down and took me through the paper step by step."

"She encouraged me . She made me feel good about the work I had done."

"I think this should continue. My Writing Fellow was very helpful, patient, and willing to work me into her schedule. Keep up the good work!"

"I like the fact that we are shown what is wrong and how to improve our work before we are graded."

"She made me feel extremely comfortable discussing the paper with her."

"She went through every part of the paper with care. Good Job!"

"She really worked with me on my paper."

"More classes should require it because many people are not motivated enough to seek help on their own."

"He took the time to make sure his comments were understood. This was a very positive experience."

"It is well organized."

"She helped me very much--made herself available to phone calls and unscheduled visits."

"Even though it was very hard to do, I feel it was important to do, and I appreciated the Writing Fellows' help."

"I think this program is a great help to the students at MCCC. Although it is an inconvenience, it helped in the long run."

"Exactly what I needed--she helped me by showing what I understood but need to clarify."

"She was very helpful. I would love to have her help again."

"I thought everything was great. Don't change a thing."

"I worked with two Writing Fellows who were not assigned to my class, and they took their own time to help me."

"I have had many useful encounters with the Writing Fellows. It is an exceptional program."

"She explained everything very thoroughly and took a lot of time with me."

"He was very helpful, and my second visit using the phone helped me with my busy schedule."

"The program was helpful and a great benefit to my studies. This program lets me get the most for my tuition dollars."

"This was very helpful for me. It made me get my paper written earlier. I didn't wait until the last minute as I usually do."

"My Writing Fellow is tough, but she really knows her stuff. Keep up the good work. This is an important program. I wrote six papers this semester. I'm burned out, but I am a better writer for it. THANKS!"

"This is a priceless service. A one-to-one conference is very effective in producing an excellent paper."

"She is a great Writing Fellow. She went out of her way to help people, and her comments were helpful."

"Great Program: Writing Fellows give you a chance to correct errors before the instructor does."

"I'd view the Writing Fellows as a definite success, but people have to remember you can only get out of the writing what you put in."

"I would go in feeling very nervous about the writing I was doing, but she always reassured me."

"She made good comments, and it was easy to take criticism from her."

"She was very good. She took a great deal of time explaining what was wrong and trying to help me correct it."

"She was great. She had confidence and patience and was well informed."

"She went out of her way to meet with me after I missed my appointment."

"My papers were a confused mess of ideas, but his suggestions helped my papers make sense! He was extremely helpful and genuinely interested in my success."

"Sometimes you can read a paper three or four times and still not catch the mistakes others would catch."

"The program is great! I always benefit from seeing a Writing Fellow. Thank God for Writing Fellows!"

"I think that it is a fantastic idea. You feel much more confident when you turn in your paper."

"I hope the college I transfer to has a program like this. I want it to continue."

"They were both very helpful and comfortable to be with. They made time for more help at odd times."

"This is the second course where I have had this Writing Fellow. Her help was valuable. I like the fact that she had hours here at the South Center. I took advantage of this."

"Two heads are better than one--no matter how good you think your work is."

"Writing Fellows are very helpful in constructive criticism. They not only point out weak areas but also strong points."

"She was very nice and spent a LOT of time with me. She showed genuine concern with helping me."

"The Fellows were very supportive and helped improve the quality of my paper immensely. Good job. Keep the program!"

"She was able to give me ideas without criticizing me in a negative way."

"This has got to be the best idea in years for benefit of students. Teachers simply do not have the time to spend with each individual student on the problems there might be on a paper. I hope Sienna Heights students will have benefit of this program."

Writing Fellow Evaluations:
A Sample of Student Suggestions

"Instructors should explain the program and procedures more completely. Some students still seem to be confused about the nature, purpose, and specifics of this program."

"Sometimes they need to be more critical."

"Some people never took a writing course, and I felt papers unnecessary in a two credit course."

"I think they should be elective, not required."

"The Writing Fellows were excellent, but instructors need to make the Writing Fellows more aware of exactly what an A paper should contain."

"It would be more helpful if the WF had already taken the class so they are more familiar with the assignments."

"It is a great program, but it needs more publicity. Make more people aware that this program exists."

Part Three:
Evaluation of the Program by Faculty Who Worked with Writing Fellows

Eighteen of the twenty faculty members who were assigned Writing Fellows during the winter 1990 semester completed an end-of-the-semester survey.

The following is a composite of their responses:

Will You Be Willing to Have Writing Fellows in a Subsequent Semester, If They Are Available?

Yes 18 No 0
(Even those who had not found time to fill out the forms, verbally indicated an eagerness to continue with Writing Fellows in the future.)

Faculty Observations about Their Writing Fellows and the Writing Fellow Program

"In the past the paper quality was equal to the rough-draft stage. **Now it is a joy to read these papers.** I still made suggestions and changes, but they were fewer by 80% to 90%. The improvement was like night and day."

"The students put a lot more time and effort into their papers now. They start sooner and revise more thoroughly. **They seem more genuinely concerned than in the past--perhaps because of the Writing Fellows' genuine concern. It rubs off.**"

"**The Writing Fellows had a warm and caring approach.** Always made arrangements to see students on two occasions if needed."

"The presence of the Writing Fellows is a clear statement that we regard good writing highly in this class."

"**I love the program** and was really unhappy when I thought I had not been assigned any Writing Fellows this winter. I was happy when I was lucky enough to get two. **Their comments on student papers were extremely thorough and intelligent. They went above and beyond.**"

"I wish this type of program had been around in my college days. Thanks for the opportunity to work with the Writing Fellows. It is a SUPER program."

"The poorest writers were helped a great deal."

"Because of the Writing Fellows, **students' apprehensions were eased**."

"My students now have a more positive attitude about written communication and its effects in employment situations."

"**Without the Writing Fellows I would have no significant writing assignments.** With the Writing Fellows I follow my deadlines more carefully, and I can see that it makes the learners more confident."

"**Careful positive evaluations were written for each student.** Often she included handouts to assist students with MLA format, punctuation. A really fine job!"

"There was a definite improvement from first to second draft. **A couple of the weaker students were 'saved' by her assistance."**

"It took less time to grade. Many of the original problems had been corrected by the time I received them for grading. I also found that the assignment was more specific as a result of working with the Fellow--which made the evaluation easier. **I was more positive in my responses because the papers were more satisfying to read."**

"I appreciate the fact that the Fellows were very flexible to my calender changes."

"She did a good job of presenting the program to the class. She was very poised and relaxed in front of the class."

"It improves writing and thinking: mine and the students'."

"Keep it going. It's the best thing to happen around here--EVER!"

Things Faculty Plan To Do Differently When They Do This Again

"I need to explain my expectations for papers more carefully, so I need to meet with the Writing Fellow more often."

"I will have the students discuss their knowledge of correct citation procedure. **I would also emphasize that the students should not take out their frustrations with the assignment on the Writing Fellow."**

"I will give better directions and explain the grading scale more clearly."

"I will try to get Writing Fellows who have taken my class. It will help if they know more about the instructor and the assignments."

"I will include more specific guidelines, and I will have the WF give a short presentation on MLA style prior to the paper."

"Perhaps we can prepare a slick folded pamphlet to give to the students: with quotes from professors and Writing Fellows."

"I need to set specific deadlines sooner. I will require first drafts to be typed."

"I will meet with the WF earlier and more to provide better insight into elements of papers in this discipline."

Part Four:
Evaluation of the Program by the Writing Fellows

The Writing Fellows have been extremely busy. This is especially true during the semester they take 254 Advanced Composition. During the fall and winter semesters, each Writing Fellow spends two hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL. Word of the Writing Fellows availability must be spreading because the number of drop-in tutoring sessions increased significantly this year. **The winter '88 semester saw very little tutoring of writing in the LAL. The following winter, with the introduction of Writing Fellows to the Writing Center in the LAL, writing sessions grew to 475. This winter ('90), the number of writing sessions leaped to 927.**

In addition to their work in the LAL, each Writing Fellow is assigned to work with a particular class across the curriculum. During the most recent semester (winter 1990), Writing Fellows worked with the first drafts of all major writing assignments in twenty-five classes. These included courses in anthropology, sociology, physics, children's literature, music for classroom teachers, education, nursing, respiratory therapy, speech, organic chemistry, logic, philosophy, secretarial procedures, automotive instrumentation, juvenile delinquency, algebra and trigonometry, marriage and family, drafting, and earth science.

In spite of the long hours, hard work, and little pay, when given the opportunity to evaluate their semester, the Writing Fellow expressed a sense of pride in their accomplishments. The Writing Fellows know they are gaining valuable experience. Perhaps the most significant statistics are these:

1) **We have had fifty students take 254 Advanced Composition--the course during which they begin their work as Writing Fellows. Forty-nine students have successfully completed the course.** (One found it necessary to drop because of medical problems.)

2) **Every Writing Fellow who plans to return to MCCC next fall has also volunteered to work as a Writing Fellow next fall.**

The following quotes from a few of their evaluations express very clearly the positive feeling the Writing Fellows have toward MCCC and its Writing Fellow approach to Writing-to-Learn and Writing-Across-the-Curriculum:

"The professor was extremely thoughtful and courteous to work with. **She also did my ego a tremendous amount of good.** She is such a gracious and giving person that she makes me feel that I am just about the best at what I do as a Writing Fellow."

"I am glad I had the experience of being a Writing Fellow. My writing has improved, and **I am just happy to be able to help others**. I am going to miss it next year--maybe Michigan State will need Writing Fellows in the future. I hope so!"

"**The Writing Fellow program has been one of the biggest plusses of my experiences and time spent at MCCC.** It has enhanced my education; improved, strengthened, and personalized my relationships with faculty members and other students; rewarded me with some very dear friends; challenged me to open doors that would have remained unopened; and taught me a multitude of skills applicable to many different life circumstances. **I am very proud and happy to a Writing Fellow.**"

"I can hardly believe this is my last semester as a Writing Fellow! **This has truly been the most rewarding experience in my college career.** Besides improving my own writing skills and meeting dozens of new friends, I have had the opportunity to develop personal relationships with professors for whom I have a great deal of respect. The wonderful feeling of satisfaction I had each time I 'fellowed' another student's writing is something I will miss."

"The Writing Fellows program has given me confidence as I tend to be a wellspring of self-doubt. I tend to get A's from my instructors. What I want is A's from my peers. The program has helped me interact with fellow students. **When they return of their own volition, I know they have accepted me and my talent. This is the greatest compliment.** My most treasured quote is from a gentleman who said, 'I hope the word doesn't get around that you are here because you are my secret weapon.'"

"I can honestly equate Fellowing to a good wine. It just gets better with age!"

"This has been a very special class. I have learned so much about writing, teaching, and myself."

"I want to tell you how glad I am that I took this class. At the beginning I was not sure if I could handle it, but now I know that I can. I almost wish I could take the class again."

"This class has certainly been the greatest learning experience I have ever had since starting school. Everyone I have talked to wishes this program success."

"This has been a very rewarding experience, and if I were asked the following question: 'If you had it to do over again, would you?' --I would answer YES without hesitation."

"One student embarrassed me by the way he kept telling me how much I helped him and taught him--but it also felt good."

"These students had me flying higher than a kite by the time our sessions were over. I am ecstatic. There is hope for America--I have witnessed it. If these young men keep their dreams alive, there is no limit to what they can accomplish."

"**Proud and glad--that is how I feel about being a Writing Fellow.** I am proud of myself for being able to achieve in class and proud to be acquainted with all the other Writing Fellows. **My heart and mind are glad, happy, even ecstatic, that I can help others --and I learn in the process. How much better can it get!"**

"Please see that the program continues. Your biggest asset is the group of Writing Fellows. We can attest to the goodness of the program. We can be your spokesmen. Not everyone is good at everything. Some need help. Isn't that what learning and life are both about--sharing knowledge."

"Being a Writing Fellow is an honor. **Tutoring produced anxiety, but it also produced results. New friends came into my life because of this program.** THANK YOU VERY MUCH!"

"Thanks for letting me be a Writing Fellow. As I have said before, **this has been the highlight of my college education thus far.** I do hope to take part in this program next fall and winter."

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Vol. II, No. 1
September 1989

For Your Information

Editor: Dr. John Holladay

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM

WRITING FELLOWS AND WRITING CENTER IN THE LAL TO CONTINUE

Monroe County Community College is now in the second semester of its Writing Fellows Program. Of the twenty-five students who took 254 Advanced Composition and served as writing tutors last semester, nine have transferred to other schools, and sixteen have returned to MCCC this fall. I am pleased to be able to report that all sixteen of our returning Writing Fellows have agreed to work with us again this semester.

Last semester LAL use was up 67% over the previous winter (945 more tutoring sessions). Part of this increase can be attributed to the development of the Writing Center in the LAL. During the winter semester, the LAL had 485 tutoring sessions devoted to writing. And we could have handled more, but most students will not seek help with their writing until it is too late--after their work has been graded.

Please encourage your students to visit the Writing Center in the LAL and to do it before you evaluate the final draft. Page three of this newsletter includes a list of the hours each writing tutor is in the Writing Center. I have included a sample of the Writing Center reference form on the back page of this newsletter. You can make copies for your own use, or send me a note and I will see that you get extra copies.

Encourage your students to visit the Writing Center in the LAL. This is not just a service for students "at risk." We can all use a sympathetic reader, and, best of all, your students will receive assistance before it is too late--when they can still revise their early efforts, clarify their thinking, and improve their writing.

We need your help. As you know, if we do not use this service, we will soon lose it.

I would also like to encourage all faculty members to consider volunteering for an hour or two each week in the LAL. Several of us have done this in the past and are continuing to do so. It can be a rewarding and enlightening experience for our students and ourselves. You can help with any subject you feel comfortable tutoring. And, if you wish to put a note on your office door directing your students to the LAL, you may spend this time during your office hours.

Have a great semester. Write On!

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WRITING FELLOWS' CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
FOR
FALL 1989

COURSE	TIME & DAYS	FACULTY	WRITING FELLOWS
251 Organic Chemistry	T.Th./5:30-7	Hileman	Masserant
152 Anthropology	M.W.F./10-11	DeVries	Flood/Gonyea
201 Electronic Office Procedures	M.W.F./10-12	Evangelinos	Faunt
152 W. Philosophy	T. Th/9:30-11	Holladay	Masserant/Curtis
251 SS & Novel	M.W.F./11-12	Holladay	Low/Sampson
256 Children's Lit.	T.Th./11-12:30	Merkel	Voss/Graves
151 Speech	T.Th./11-12:30	Leach	Littrell/Graves
151 Sociology	T.Th/7:45-9:10 (Bedford)	Moyer	Watkins
151 Sociology	M.W./5:35-7:00 (Jefferson)	Moyer	Moyer
151 History W. Civ.	M.W./5:35-7:00	Havrilsak	Wenzel/Faunt
251 Botany	M.W.F./11-12:00	Howe	Longton
251 Physics	M.W.Th.F./1-2	Spalding	Mowen
151 Education	Tues./2-3:30	Brewer	Leathers

****

THIRTEEN CLASSES / SIXTEEN WRITING FELLOWS
DAY AND NIGHT CLASSES / FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME FACULTY
ALL THREE CAMPUSES / THREE DEPARTMENTS:
HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES
MATH/SCIENCES
BUSINESS

****

WRITING FELLOWS FOR FALL 1989
1) Don Curtis 2) Peggy Faunt 3) Edna Flood 4) Hollie Gonyea 5) Dawn Graves
6) Kristin Leathers 7) Charlene Littrell 8) Margaret Longton 9) Sarah Low
10) Michelle Masserant 11) Rachael Mowen 12) Eugene Moyer 13) Steve Sampson
14) RoseMarie Voss 15) Patricia Watkins 16) Wendy Wenzel

Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab

★ Free Tutoring ★

What the Writing Center Is:

+ An individualized service available to all MCCC students
+ We tutor writing for every course on campus. You need NOT be enrolled in a composition course in order to work with a tutor to improve your writing.

What the Writing Center Is Not:

+ We are not a service limited to poor students: we help good students get better, and we help weak students get stronger.
+ We are not a proofreading or editing service.
+ We are staffed with writing tutors who are trained to help you develop confidence and skill in writing, but they are not permitted to "fix" papers for you. They will gladly help you learn to "fix" your own papers.

What the Writing Center Offers:
in writing we can:

+ Diagnose weaknesses andstrengths in you writing skills.
+ Arrange one-on-one tutoring on a regular weekly basis, or we can help with a particular assignment.

The L.A.L. is open during these hours

Monday 9:30a.m. - 7:00p.m.
Tuesday 9:30a.m. - 7:00p.m.
Wednesday 9:30a.m. - 4:00p.m.
Thursday 9:30a.m. - 4:00p.m.
Friday 9:30a.m. -12:30p.m.
Saturday 9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.

Writing tutors are not always available so call ahead to make an appointment.

We are ready to help with every stage of the writing process:
Outlines, Rough Drafts, Revisions
Brainstorming

Word processors are available for Student use.

Located in the Campbell Learning Resource Center, L-218
(313) 242-7300, extension 278

WRITING CENTER IN THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE LAB
Writing Fellows' Hours / Fall 1989
For an Appointment call 242-7300 / ext. 278.

MONDAY

	WF #1	WF #2
9:30-10:30	Dr. Holladay	
10:00-11:00	Rachael Hoven	Sarah Low
11:00-12:00		
12:00- 1:00	Dawn Graves	
1:00- 2:00	Dawn Graves	
2:00- 3:00		
3:00- 4:00	Michelle Masserant	
4:00- 5:00	Michelle Masserant	Don Curtis
4:30- 5:30	Peggy Faunt	
5:30- 6:30	Peggy Faunt	

TUESDAY

9:30-10:30	Dr. Leach	
10:00-11:00	Edna Flood	
11:00-12:00	Edna Flood	Gene Moyer
12:00-1:00	Hollie Gonyea	
1:00-2:00	Kristin Leathers	Rose Voss
2:00-3:00	Kristin Leathers	
3:00-4:00	Pat Watkins	
4:00-5:00	Pat Watkins	
5:00-6:00	Don Curtis	

WEDNESDAY

9:30-10:30	Dr. Holladay	
10:00-11:00	Rachael Hoven	Sarah Low
11:00-12:00		
12:00-1:00	Margaret Longton	Rose Voss
1:00-2:00	Margaret Longton	
2:00-3:00	Wendy Wensel	
3:00-4:00	Wendy Wensel	

THURSDAY

9:30-10:30	Dr. Leach
11:00-12:00	Gene Moyer
12:00-1:00	Hollie Gonyea
1:00-2:00	Charlie Littrell
2:00-3:00	Charlie Littrell

FRIDAY

9:30-10:30	Dr. Holladay
10:00-11:00	Steve Sampson
11:00-12:00	Steve Sampson

Referral Form
for the
Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab
Monroe County Community College

DATE _____
Instructor: PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO THE STUDENT'S THEME, if appropriate.

I am referring _____ to the LAL/Writing Center for assistance with the writing skills noted below:

_____
(Course Instructor)

****

STUDENT: You may bring this form to the LAL (second floor of the LRC). Someone may be available to work with you, but you would be wise to call ahead and make an appointment (242-7300 ext. 278).

****

Date_____

Instructor _____ Student _____

Your student came to the LAL/Writing Center today. We worked in the following way:

_____
(Writing Consultant)

****

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Vol. II, No. 2
October 1989

For Your Information

Editor: Dr. John Holladay

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM

Guest Editorial: Writing to Learn

by Larry Levy / Delta College
Midland, Michigan

Professor Levy has won an award for creative change at Delta College. He describes below some of the changes he helped bring to Delta College, and he tells why these changes are so critical to learning in every discipline. We thank him for granting us permission to reprint this article.

The teacher enters the classroom, striding to the podium and arranging the session's lecture notes. Students open their notebooks and copy the teacher's words. For the next 50 minutes the teacher's voice holds forth while the students' pens scratch away on paper.

Sound familiar? This scene probably describes many typical junior high, high school and college classroom experiences. I know it describes a large part of mine. And so what? This scene is repeated so regularly that few question its validity.

But teachers and students should question the routinely passive role students play in their classrooms. Go into many a classroom from seventh grade on up and note how language works: When do students write more than the words the teacher provides? How does the teacher know what students are hearing and, moreover, what they are learning? And, except at quiz or test time, *when* will the teacher find out?

The teacher could find out during every session. There are other ways to teach and learn than by lecturing, and these ways involve a shift in the role language functions. In another classroom the teacher asks students to take out a sheet of paper and for the first few minutes describe the most important idea in that day's reading assignment. In another class, the teacher interrupts an economics lecture by asking students to solve a supply-and-demand problem. In a third room the teacher ends a biology lecture by asking students to trace a bite of hamburg through the digestive system.

What's happening here? Yes, the teachers are still lecturing, but clearly they are doing more than talking to the blackboard. Yes, the students are writing, but not merely parroting words or filling in blanks with memorized terms. For a change they are owning rather than renting the language of the classroom. For a change they are applying theory and thinking creatively.

What's happening is neither expensive nor difficult. Commonly called "writing across the curriculum" or, as some educators prefer, "writing to learn," it is neither a fad nor a gimmick, but a philosophy of education which regularly uses writing — particularly informal types like "free writes," journals, and logbooks — to promote learning.

Informal writing — like speaking, reading, and listening — is available to teachers of all subjects. During the last few years I have met many teachers who understand this. A geology teacher began his course by asking students to write three things that have nothing to do with geology, then demonstrated how whatever they wrote connected to geology. A pencil? Consider the graphite. The plant on the window sill? Consider the soil composition. His students kept journals recording their growing awareness of geology in their lives outside the classroom. At the end of the semester over 90 percent of his students, who were at first quite skeptical, confirmed the value of the journal to their learning of geology.

A marketing teacher posed a problem: how to sell a new soft drink. After several minutes of writing, students volunteered their hunches, the teacher recording them on the board. Afterwards she added some of her own ideas to the list.

An automotive technology teacher role-played the part of a customer whose car wasn't starting. Describing his problem, he gave students five minutes to list questions they might ask. After answering questions, students analyzed what they believe they learned and what problem they supposed the car had.

At Delta College, now in the second year of implementing an all-college "writing to learn" policy, over 100 full and part-time teachers from every division have proposed ways to promote student learning through the use of writing. Surveys of students and faculty have already shown tremendous support. Nearly 90 percent of 750 students surveyed last year agreed that the writing component in their courses did indeed promote their learning.

Many colleges and school systems around the nation and abroad are doing likewise, including the Midland Public Schools. Last year the board of education approved a system-wide commitment to "writing to learn." It is a decision every Midland teacher and student should applaud.

For teachers, writing can provide ways to engage every student simultaneously in the lesson at

hand. Writing can be an effective way to introduce, interrupt or close a lecture. Writing can be a way to discover what students are learning, wondering about, confused by. Writing can balance rote memory work by providing frequent, even daily, opportunities for problem solving and creative thought. Moreover, writing also unites teachers of kindergarten through college, of algebra through zoology, around the common theme of effective teaching and learning. Workshops devoted to "writing to learn" generate a kind of intense teacher-to-teacher shop talk too often reserved for lunch or car pools.

For students, writing provides an opportunity to rehearse thoughts and feelings before the graded performance — in much the same way that athletes and actors rehearse before the big game or opening night. Writing gives a chance to translate what happens in class into personal terms, to connect lessons to ideas and events outside of class.

Maybe this all sounds too obvious. Doesn't everybody approve of writing in school? It's like approving of motherhood.

But not everybody understands. The most common misconception is that "writing to learn" interferes with an already crowded curriculm. "I'm interested, but just don't have the time," I've heard a few teachers say. Does this mean the teacher "must" lecture from opening to closing bell? When "wall-to-wall" lecturers confess that their students' performance falls short of expectations, I recall Jim Bouton's book about baseball managers: *"I managed Good But Boy, Did They Play Bad"*. If teachers "teach good," shouldn't students "learn good"?

Some teachers still believe writing is for English classes only. Despite evidence that informal and ungraded writing promotes learning, some believe every word a student writes must be corrected and letter graded. Some cannot grasp the difference between *learning to write* and *writing to learn*. Such beliefs, however sincere, help neither teachers nor students.

A few years ago I spent a day sitting in high school classes taught by teachers often praised for their ability. I was struck by the sameness of structure in every class, regardless of the discipline. The teacher spoke, the students listened and took notes. Occasionally the teacher asked questions; the more assertive students responded. Many students, I suspected, went through the entire day without one opportunity to reflect upon or in any way participate in the lessons.

In one class the teacher told me that the day's lesson covered a very difficult concept. He lectured enthusiastically for the entire period. Did students now understand? How could he know?

What would have happened had he written the term on the board and asked all students to write their best definition, illustrating with an example from the text, their imagination, or their experience outside of school? Afterwards he might have had students exchange writings seeking a clearer meaning or correcting a confusion. He might have called on several students, using their remarks as a springboard for further questians and — yes — lecturing. He might have collected all the writings and responded briefly to insights or questions, perhaps bringing the most appropriate remarks back to class.

Of course, this takes time, particularly in responding to student writing. But where letter grading expedites a teacher's job, students often remark how little the letter grade tells them. Furthermore, a letter grade is usually a final step in a lesson rather than part of the dialogue of learning. "Writing to learn" is about dialogue.

Such opportunities for interaction exist in any teaching and learning situation, in and out of school. After a soccer scrimmage the coach, ready to share his notes, instead asked the players to identify one thing they'd done well. The players correctly identified the clever pass, the assist resulting in a goal, the strong defensive move. Then the coach asked players to identify one thing they needed to do to improve. The players — 10- and 11-year-old kids — provided many of the same ideas the coach had in his notes. But how different and better that they saw it for themselves.

A mother started a "shared notebook" with her teen-age son. In the first entry she wrote her wish to have more conversation with him. On the next page he wrote back that he'd give it a try. And so for several months they wrote thoughts and feelings that had long gone unstated between them, improving their understanding of themselves and each other.

An employer running a small business wanted workers to note real and potential problems and pose solutions. She provided a notebook where workers jotted their observations and ideas. The quality of discussion improved, as did relationships between owner and employees who felt they had a common stake in the venture.

The coach, parent and employer may not be professional teachers, but they are teaching nonetheless. They realize intuitively that effective teaching and learning begins with an understanding of learning as a process and how language is part of that process. As an industry chief executive officer once told me, each party has to believe the other has something to say, and each has to believe the other is listening.

The Midland Public Schools board of education is currently reviewing the elementary curriculum. They are considering shifting from the current "intermediate school" to "middle school" structure and philosophy. They are expanding partnerships with business and industry. But all of these worthy ventures miss the point if classrooms continue to put the students' voices on hold. They are little more than cosmetic changes so long as the teacher still sees him or herself as occupying the spotlight like a star performer. "Writing to learn" shifts a teacher from center stage to the wings, from lead singer to director. The teacher is not less in charge, but exercises a different kind of authority. The shift requires risk-taking and humility. It is worth the risk.

Lecturing is not necessarily bad, but lecturing *only* is not good enough. A lot has been spoken and written about the need for students to develop skills in "higher order thinking" and "critical thinking" and "creative thinking." A lot has been spoken and written about the need for more dialogue between teacher and student, and the need for students to be "active learners." How will this happen in classrooms where for days and weeks on end the dominant or only language is the voice of the authority — the teacher or textbook (or guest speaker or film narrator, etc.) and the silence of students writing only the words spoonfed to them?

"Writing to learn" can provide students with a regular and informal means of responding to lectures, textbooks, labs, field work, tests, and to their own progress and questions. "Writing to learn" can provide teachers with a low-stress and routine way to discover what every student in the room is learning or not learning. Most of all, "writing to learn" can engage every student in active, cooperative, creative and critical thinking.

I know of no other teaching technique that can make this claim.

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Vol. II, No. 3
November 1989

For Your Information

Editor: Dr. John Holladay

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM

MCCC STAFF DEVELOPMENT: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ROUECHE (10-25-89)

This semester's staff development program **"Excellence—A College-Wide Commitment"** was lead by Dr. John Roueche, a superior speaker, teacher, and national expert on college teaching. He obviously practices what he preaches. His presentation was extremely effective--filled with many moving and amusing anecdotes. Dr. Roueche covered many topics in his brief visit. The summary that follows includes only a few highlights. Nonetheless, most of us can benefit from a review. It may jog the memory of those who attended, and it will provide our part-time instructors with some of the excellent, thought-provoking ideas of that day. As you might suspect, I am particularly fond of his ideas about writing in all courses.

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL TEACHING

Dr. Roueche feels these are a few of the keys to successful teaching:

1) **SET HIGH STANDARDS**: Do not complain about poor effort if you have failed to set high standards from the start.

2) **MAKE STUDENTS AWARE THAT ATTENDANCE IS THE BEST INDICATOR OF EXCELLENCE**. (As Woody Allen says: "Showing up is 90 percent of success.") This is the minimum commitment. But, of course, attendance works both ways. The instructor must also attend. The first hour, the first day, the first week are the most critical parts of the semester. Use the first hours completely, actively. Pay attention to what is going on in the classroom.
Reduce distance in the classroom between you and your students. Greet students as they enter class. Some instructors even stand at the door and shake hands with each student as he or she enters for the first time.

3) **INCREASE WRITING IN ALL COURSES**. This will improve motivation and participation in the class. It will end the illusion of "passive" learning. **Get students to think and problem solve WITH LANGUAGE—writing and speaking.** Have them verbalize about what they are supposed to have learned. **Avoid simple multiple-choice testing.** Only use multiple choice if you can tie it in with some problem-solving activity, some word problems which require more than rote memorization of someone else's answers. **Increase word problems in all courses.** Your ability to engage your students positively and consistently is the main key to your success as a teacher. The more actively they are involved, the higher the learning curve--the greater the degree of critical thinking that is taking place. Only the small minority, the exceptional few can learn passively. **(See Professor Merkel's article on page five for more information on this aspect of writing to learn.)**

4) **GIVE HOMEWORK**, and after you give it: collect it, read it, grade it, and return it--promptly.

5) **RESPONDING**: **100 percent of your students should take part**. That should be your goal for the week at least. EACH student should be involved and feel he or she is an important part of each class.

6) **DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS THAT REQUIRE SIMPLE RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS.** Especially early in the semester, students should have every opportunity to take part in discussions that include a safe environment.

7) **DO NOT INTERRUPT OR ANTICIPATE WHEN A STUDENT IS ASKING A QUESTION.** Wait at least **seven seconds** for the students to respond to one of your questions.

8) A MANDATORY ATTENDANCE POLICY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESSFUL TEACHING . A number of colleges (Miami Dade among them) have college-wide attendance policies: **after four absences, students are dropped from a course.** The instructor calls the student the day he or she misses. Counselors also call. **This has not hurt enrollment; in fact, in many cases enrollment has doubled since it began.**

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

1) SCHOOLS MUST HAVE PLACEMENT. Testing must be mandatory, and placement must be mandatory. All students should be tested, and all students should be required to enroll in developmental courses if they lack the needed skills.
Do not let students take college-level classes until they have a reasonable chance of success. **Without these minimum standards, you can only have two results: 1) HIGH ATTRITION because students cannot do college-level work, or 2) WATERED DOWN COURSES because students cannot do college-level work.**
Having these requirements will NOT cause students to avoid your school. In fact, every school that has these requirements has experienced increased enrollment, especially in sophomore level courses.
Having these developmental courses will not cost your college more money. You will receive tuition. You will receive state funding. And most important of all, the procedure will allow your students to succeed--thus increasing retention and increasing enrollment in higher level courses.
Students should not only test in to developmental courses. They must also test out of developmental courses. Even the greatest teachers of all time (Christ, Buddha, Ghandi) could not teach successfully in a classroom where students have eighteen years of differences in language or mathematical skills.
So the lack of mandatory placement in developmental courses dooms both teachers and students to failure.

2) SCHOOLS SHOULD ALLOW NO LATE REGISTRATION. Late registration should be defined as the week BEFORE classes begin. There is no place in the world of work for people who are late. If you are allowing students to miss the first two or three days of class, you are sending the wrong message during that crucial first week, first day, first hour .

Winter Term 1990: Writing Fellows and Course Selections

Thanks to all faculty who nominated students to receive writing fellowships for next semester. You did a great job. Next semesters' Writing Fellows will be an outstanding group--truly some of the best students on campus.

We have examined their high school transcripts, their ASSET, SAT, and ACT test scores--whenever possible. Each student has submitted a writing sample, and each has been interviewed. As a result, I can safely say we have an exceptional group of students who have accepted our fellowship offer and have signed up for 254 Advanced Composition in the winter term.

Since some of our new faculty and part-time faculty may not be familiar with our Writing Center and Writing Fellows Program, I will briefly review what these students will be doing next semester. In addition to working to improve their own writing skills in their advanced composition class, each student will serve as a MCCC Writing Fellow. **Writing Fellows serve the college and their fellow students in two ways:**

1) Each is available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab. With last year's and this year's Writing Fellows in the lab next semester, writing tutors will be available more than seventy hours a week. **During these seventy-plus hours, our Writing Fellows are available to tutor students who are writing papers for any class the college offers.** Students may drop in; they may call for an appointment; or **they may be referred to the Writing Center by one of our instructors.**

Most writing centers have a hard time attracting the students who need help the most. For a variety of reasons, many students will not seek the help they need. (The few who do use the writing center on their own are quite often excellent students, but that is why they are good students--they are willing to do whatever they must do to succeed.)

Nevertheless, our Writing Center in the LAL now assists many more students because they must go to the Writing Center to work with their Writing Fellows. That is where the Writing Felllows' second responsibility comes into the picture:

2) Each Writing Fellow is assigned to one non-writing class. These classes come from every division on campus. In the past two semesters we have worked with drafting, nursing, anthropology, history, philosophy, physics, political science, chemistry, biology, and many more courses in a variety of disciplines. The one thing each class has in common is this: each uses formal writing assignments as part of the course requirements.

The Writing Fellows allow faculty to get students on task sooner and keep them on task longer. Each time a paper is assigned, the instructor assigns two due dates. When the first draft of the paper is collected, the instructor gives these to his Writing Fellow. The Writing Fellow reads the first drafts and prepares a written response to the draft. Then the student goes to the Writing Center in the LAL to discuss and get back his first draft. **On the second due date (normally a couple of weeks later) each student submits a revised second draft--along with the first draft and the Writing Fellow's written critique.**

This brings about several desirable results:

1) Faculty can be certain each student has spent at least a couple of weeks writing and revising his or her paper. No one is allowed to wait until the last minute to write the paper.

(continued on the next page)

2) **Students, even though they may have been reluctant to seek help on their own, now receive feedback at a time when they can substantially improve their first effort.** They know this produces a better effort, and nearly all appreciate working with fellow students.

3) The Writing Fellows improve their own writing skills while working closely with other students.

4) **Perhaps most important of all, students begin to see that writing is a necessary and natural way to learn in all disciplines.** They find themselves writing more often and in a wider variety of courses. This is the ideal situation. Some schools now place a "W" in the schedule beside each course that has a writing component. These writing-intensive courses are set apart as something special. To be sure, writing can and should drive and shape learning, but it is not something reserved for a select few teachers in a minority of our courses. **Writing is something students should come to expect as a normal part of learning in all courses.**

Each time students complete a course which uses writing to drive the learning, they become more comfortable with the medium. It becomes a normal way of doing things. They realize that faculty who follow and encourage them to work through the process are interested in seeing them do well. This is especially true when Writing Fellows or other classmates work together to assess early efforts and allow improvements to be made before the final effort is graded. **Like a drama or athletic coach, faculty have a responsibility to guide and monitor the learning process.** Since most faculty are too busy to become personally involved with each stage of the process, this is where classmates or Writing Fellows can help.

Each time students write in the disciplines, slowly but surely the old double standard begins to dissolve: writing is no longer seen as a skill reserved for a few English teachers with unrealistically high standards.

I realize we and our students would be better served if each writing tutor had an advanced degree in composition and twenty years of experience, but that is not likely to happen here or anywhere else. So what is the next best alternative? Should faculty carry the entire load? Will they?

To be sure, even the best Writing Fellow is no expert. From time to time, some will make mistakes and mix in poor advice along with the encouragement, concern, and good advice they usually provide. Does this mean our students are better served as they were in the past--with no guidance? Should every assignment be one shot, hit or miss, success or failure?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, for the past two semesters we have had some good students who are willing to spend time helping other students become better writers. **The more classes we can get involved in this activity, the greater the impact on writing and learning.** I am delighted to work at a school which is willing to provide such a program. I applaud the administration of MCCC for their support.

However, if this excellent and innovative approach to writing in the disciplines is to continue, we must have the continued support of the full-time and part-time faculty. You can help assure our continued success by doing two things:

1) **If you spot students who have writing problems, send them to the Writing Center in the LAL for help: either before or after a paper has been graded.**

2) **If you have a course which uses writing, request a Writing Fellow for your class.** We may not have enough to fill every request, but we will never know until you ask. **If you could use a Writing Fellow, please do one of the following: a) Call John Holladay (ext. 340) and request a Writing Fellow for next semester; or b) Send a note to John Holladay or to the Humanities-Social Sciences Division requesting a Writing Fellow for next semester. Don't wait. Do it now! Thanks for all your help!**

How to Use Writing to Learn in the Disciplines

by Dr. Robert Merkel

My colleagues are all the time asking me: **"Bob, how can I use writing-across-the-curriculum techniques in my discipline, so I can be a really great professor like you?"**
So I have decided to share some of the techniques which I have used successfully these past couple of semesters:

1) **If you have taught your students to perform an activity (and, of course, you have), ask them to write a letter to a friend explaining how to do that activity**:

a) how to sing
b) how to use the semicolon
c) how to use a palette knife
d) how to speak in public
e) etc. (you get the idea).

2) **Have your students simply summarize your lecture at the end of the class period**. Tell them they are secret agents, hired to duplicate your lecture by virtue of their superior mentalities and writing abilities, to smuggle into where ever for whatever . . . (you get the idea).

3) **Give your students class time to write out questions which they can foresee as possibly occurring on the next quiz**. If they get some right--tell them. This helps them to think like a teacher instead of like a student. It shows you how they think and how they have interpreted your lecture. And it gives you potential questions for future tests. This is time well spent for both teacher and student.

4) **Have the students formalize (re-copy and re-organize) their class notes**. They can do this out of class. You collect their formal products and scan them quickly, making a comment in one or two words: Neat. Good thinking.

5) **Have your students, toward the end of your class, write their own "ticket' out of this "God-forsaken, hell-hole of a class" by correctly demonstrating in writing something which you have recently taught them**:

a) the correct spelling of terms you are currently using,
b) the correct order of a scientific series,
c) a compound (or a complex) sentence structure,
d) the correct working out of an algebra problem.

Writing is terribly important--no doubt about it. I had been slighting this gambit until recently, and my students' learning had suffered as a result.

I hope you'll employ some of these writing methods in your classes, and let me know what works for you.

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Vol. II, No. 4
January 1990

For Your Information

Editor: Dr. John Holladay

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM

Writing Fellows Begin Third Semester of Service To MCCC Students

MCCC now has thirty-five Writing Fellows. Ten students are in their third semester of service, and twenty-five students have begun their first semester as Writing Fellows.

All thirty-five Writing Fellows are available to tutor students from every course at MCCC. Each Writing Fellow is available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL. That means we can provide up to seventy hours a week--if students will either drop in of make an appointment. Most, however, will not not seek help on their own--no matter how badly they need help. Faculty members can help by sending students to the Writing Center in the LAL. If you have students who have writing problems, please require them to bring their work to the Writing Center: before the final draft is due, or to revise a draft you find unacceptable.

MCCC Writing Fellows do more than work in the Writing Center in the LAL. Each Writing Fellow is also assigned to a particular course (see the chart on page two). In these courses, they will read and respond to the first draft of required papers. Students will receive a written commentary and will meet with the Writing Fellow to discuss ways to improve the first draft. The instructor will receive the first draft, the Writing Fellow's written commentary, and the final draft of the writing assignment.

The numbers for this semester are as follows:

Number of Faculty Using Writing Fellows to Work with Writing Assignments in Non-Writing Courses	= 19
Number of Writing Fellows	= 35
Number of Classes with Writing Fellows Assigned	= 25
Students in Classes with Writing Fellows Assigned	= 568
Hours Writing Fellows Are Available Each Week in the Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab	= 70

Who Can Use the Services of the Writing Fellows? Every teacher and every student in every class at MCCC.

How Do Students Get Help with Their Writing? Call the LAL and make an appointment with a Writing Fellow (ext. 278).

How Can Faculty Make Use of the Writing Fellows? Send students to the Writing Center in the LAL. Give specific instructions about the help you wish the student to receive.

We have some talented people willing to help faculty and students do the best they are capable of on every writing assignment. Whether we continue is up to you. As with almost anything worth having, we must either use it or lose it!

MCCC Classes with Writing Fellows / Winter 1990

Class	Day/Time	Instructor	Writing Fellows
152 Anthropology	T/TH 8-9:30	DeVries	Ann Frost /Janette Stanton
151 Sociology	MWF 10-11:00	DeVries	Kristin Leathers
151 Sociology	M/W 5:30-7:00	DeVries	Eugene Moyer
152 Physics	MWF 10-11:00	Spalding	Debbie Waltz
252 Eng. Physics	MWF 1-2:00	Spalding	Charlene Littrell
256 Children's Lit.	T/TH 11-12:30	Merkel	Lisa Salisbury / Tim Hyatt
165 Basic Music for Class. Teachers	T/TH 9:30-11	Merkel	Robert Gable /Hollie Gonyea
151 Intro. Education	Tues. 2:30-4:00	Orwin	Sue Vining/Vivian Walczesky
151 Intro. Education	Thur. 2:30-4:00	Orwin	Melissa Steinman
210 Nursing	Tues. 1:30-3:30	Schramm	Dawn Graves
210 Nursing	Tues. 1:30-3:30	Odneal	Michelle Masserant
112 Cardiopulmonary Pathophysiology	MWF 11:30-12:30	Woltman	Dodie Strazzulla
151 Speech	T/TH 9:30-11:00	Leach	Rose Voss / Elaine Bryson
252 Organic Chem.	T/TH 5:30-7:00	Hileman	Vivian Walczesky
151 Logic	MWF 10-11:00	Holladay	Jeff Bock /Angela Manwaring
152 West. Philosophy	T/TH 9:30-11	Holladay	Rebecca Koepke / Joan Heck
206 Adm. and Office Procedures	MTWTH 10-11:00	Evangelinos	Peggy Faunt
151 Sociology	T/TH 11-12:30	Leski	Rose Matheny /Steve Sampson
109 Nursing	MW 10-11:00 T 8-10:00	Brooke/ Eack	Kristin Servey /Julie Frank
114 Automotive Instrumentation	T/TH 9-12:00	Kehrer	Rachael Beeler
252 Juvenile Delinq.	MWF 11-12:00	Davis	Jason Breitner/Chris Nieswender
152 College Algebra and Trigonometry	MWF 11-12:00	Harmon	Grace Dyer / Rachael Mowen
152 Mar. & Family	T/TH 7:45-9:10 (Bedford)	Moyer	Patricia Watkins
128 Drafting	T/TH 1:35-5:00	Fink	Robert Gable
151 Earth Science	T/TH 9-10:30	Pettit	Mark Scherer/Angela Heil/Edna Flood

Monroe County Community College
Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program
Fall 1989

During the fall semester 1989, thirteen MCCC classes had Writing Fellows assigned to assist their fellow students with all major writing assignments. At the end of the semester, students in these classes completed a survey designed to evaluate their experiences with the Writing Fellows. The approval rate is quite encouraging. Nearly nine of every ten students found the experience helpful or very helpful. (Eleven of the thirteen classes filled out the survey.)

1) How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

41%	Very Helpful	(67 of 165)
46%	Helpful	(76 of 165)
13%	Marginally Helpful	(21 of 165)
less than 1%	Not Helpful	(1 of 165)

2) How helpful were your conferences with Writing Fellows?
(A few were unable to arrange conferences and had to rely on written comments.)

42%	Very Helpful	(61 of 148)
45%	Helpful	(67 of 148)
13%	Marginally Helpful	(19 of 148)
less than 1%	Not Helpful	(1 of 148)

3) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked.

43%	Very Helpful	(70 of 161)
47%	Helpful	(76 of 161)
9%	Marginally Helpful	(14 of 161)
less than 1%	Not Helpful	(1 of 161)

4) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows in general).

40%	Very Helpful	(62 of 157)
53%	Helpful	(83 of 157)
7%	Marginally Helpful	(11 of 157)
less than 1%	Not Helpful	(1 of 157)

Monroe County Community College

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Student Comments on Their Experiences with MCCC Writing Fellows

When given the opportunity to evaluate their experiences, nearly every student had good things to say about his or her Writing Fellows:

"I probably wouldn't have asked for their help, but I am glad that we had to use them because it helped ."

"I feel use of the Writing Fellows should be required in all classes where papers will be written."

"Thank you for your time, Writing Fellows."

"The program is wonderful, and it has become much more publicized this semester."

"Her encouragement and the fact that she liked my paper made me want to make the paper even better."

"To have things written about your paper is good, but actually discussing it and mulling over ways to fix it is exceptional!"

"This should be mandatory for freshmen--to let them know of the help that is out there!"

"If I am having trouble on any of my papers in the future, I will definitely consider showing it to a Writing Fellow so that he or she may try and help me."

"They are a credit to the college and they should continue."

"She showed me what I needed to make my papers complete."

"Very well organized. A great program. The time was very well spent."

"She made her advice very positive."

"Congratulations to all of you who are involved in the Writing Fellows program. I am sure you have already helped many students at MCCC, including me. Whether the majority realize it or not, we can all use a little help. Thanks again."

"I felt more positive about writing my papers knowing an unbiased person would be checking it over before my instructor."

"I liked the overall evaluation sheet they gave out."

"The conferences helped me to understand what I did not understand."

"She is very cooperative and open to discussion and compromise regarding writing styles. She is very likeable, friendly, enthusiastic, and well-educated. She gave much positive feedback."

Faculty Members' Comments on Working with Writing Fellows:

"It is a good way to keep the students on a time schedule. They are forced to make my assignments a priority. The experience has also forced me to 'tighten up' my writing assignments. The papers are neater, tighter, and they avoid the more egregious language errors."

"My WF went out of her way to establish meeting times at the convenience of the students."

"She showed a great deal of flexibility in dealing with students who needed more time."

"Students get the signal: 'Your professor considers your writing to be very important. Act accordingly.' They do."

WRITING CENTER IN THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE LAB

Writing Fellows' Hours / Winter 1990

40

MONDAY

	WF #1	WF #2
10:00-11:00	Rachael Mowen_/	Carl Bolster___/
11:00-12:00	Rose Matheny___/	Timothy Hyatt__/
11:30-12:30	Angela Heil__/	Elaine Lemley_/
12:00- 1:00	Timothy Hyatt__/	___/
12:30- 1:30	Jeff Bock_/	Elaine Lemley___/
1:00- 2:00	Grace Dyer_/	Kristin Servey___/
2:00- 3:00	Kristin Servey__/	Rachael Beeler__/
3:00- 4:00	_____/	
4:00- 5:00	_____/	
5:00- 6:00	Joan Heck___/	
6:00- 7:00	Joan Heck___/	

TUESDAY

9:30-10:30	Rose Voss__/		
10:00-11:00	Debbie Waltz___/		
10:30-11:30	Kristin Leathers_/	Rebecca Koepke___/	
11:00-12:00	Debbie Waltz__/	Julie Frank ___/	
11:30-12:30	Kristin Leathers_/	Mark Scherer___/	
12:00-1:00	Hollie Gonyea_/	Dawn M. Graves_/	
12:30-1:30	Eugene Moyer_/	Michelle Masserant_/	Janette Stanton__/
1:30-2:30	Michelle Masserant_/		
3:00-4:00	Chris Nieswender___/	Ann Frost__/	
4:00-5:00	Vivian Walczesky___/	Ann Frost__/	
5:00-6:00	Melissa Steinman___/		
6:00-7:00	Melissa Steinman___/		

WEDNESDAY

9:30-10:30	Angela Manwaring___/	
10:00-11:00	Rachael Mowen_/	Carl Bolster___/
10:30-11:30	Angela Manwaring___/	
11:00-12:00	Rose Matheny___/	Jason Breitner__/
11:30-12:30	Robert Gable___/	
12:00-1:00	Jeff Bock___/	Jason Breitner__/
12:30-1:30	Robert Gable___/	
1:00-2:00	Grace Dyer_/	
2:00-3:00	Rachel Beeler___/	
3:00-4:00	_____/	

THURSDAY

9:30-10:30	Rose Voss__/	
10:30-11:30	Rebecca Koepke___/	Sue Vining____/
11:00-12:00	Eugene Moyer_/	Vivian Walczesky__/
11:30-12:30	Mark Scherer__/	Sue Vining___/
12:00-1:00	Hollie Gonyea_/	Dawn M. Graves_/
12:30-1:30	Janette Stanton__/	
12:30-2:30	Edna Flood_/	
3:00-4:00	Chris Nieswender__/	

FRIDAY

10:00-11:00	Steve Sampson_/	Julie Frank___/
11:00-12:00	Steve Sampson_/	Lisa Salisbury___/
11:30-12:30	Angela Heil__/	

Saturday

9:00-10:00	Dodie Strazzulla___/
10:00-11:00	Dodie Strazzulla___/
11:00-12:00	_____/
12:00-1:00	_____/

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Vol. II, No. 5
February 1990

For Your Information

Editor: Dr. John Holladay

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM

Writing for Survival

(VHS Video / Now in MCCC LRC Collection)
28 minutes (VC 862)

The following is synopsis of a recent video purchased by MCCC. I heartily recommend this program to our faculty--especially to those who are teaching students planning to become engineers, chemists, computer programmers, and technicians. You will do yourself and your students a service if you show and discuss this program. It provides an important message for all of our future graduates.

Synopsis:

The program begins with Katherine Beuler, a fourth-semester student in mechanical engineering at Chico State, California, telling of her experiences as an engineering trainee.

She says she quickly discovered that "to my astonishment, one of the primary things I was called upon to do was to write: proposals, cost estimates, contracts, inter-office memos, specifications, and final reports. . . . Writing and communication were often more important than the mere design work." All of the experienced people she came into contact with told her that speaking and writing skills were absolutely essential engineering tools.

Interviews with a varitey of professionals in technical fields illustrate the importance of writing and communication to success in these technical fields.

1) Doug Collar, Mechanical Engineer: "I do a lot of writing in my work." He explains that most of his work involves gathering information and then reducing that information into reports. "Fifty or sixty percent of my time is spent in writing. It could be reports, letters, inter-company memos."

2) Maruca Lopez, Agricultural Products Manager, Product Safety Dept.: "About fifty percent of my time is devoted to writing."

3) Jim Trudeau, Computer Programmer Analyst: "I write a tremendous number of management reports. . . . I spend between fifty and seventy percent of my time writing."

4) Adrian Borgias, Chemist, Dept. of Engineering Research: "I spend probably sixty percent of my time writing while I am out in the field, and nearly eighty percent of my time writing while I am in the office."

These technicians and engineers describe in some detail how critically important writing has been to their careers:

"Being able to get your thoughts down clearly on paper will take you a long way."

"Writing is extremely important in a company as large as this one. It is the only way to communicate with your fellow workers. More importantly, it's the only way to communicate to your superiors what you are doing."

"I can think of untold examples of brilliant electrical engineers, geniuses in their field who are literally useless because all that wonderful intellect they possess could not be communicated effectively to anybody."

"People judge you by what they see that you have written."

"The challenge of an engineer is information overload. . . . You end up with more information than you can handle. The challenge is to take that information and reduce it down to something that is readable, usable, and not just an overload. They key is putting it out in a simple report that is simple to read and gets your information across."

"I cannot over-stress the value of the ability to write clearly and to write quickly."

"Most engineers in their schooling rarely write. And whenever they get the opportunity, they hide from it. Get in the middle of it. Try it. Every bit of writing you do is practice, and every time you do it, you will be better at it."

Each Technician and Engineer Tells What He or She Thinks Is Most Important:

1) Know Your Subject.
2) Know Your Purpose.
3) Know Your Audience.
4) Develop a Flexible Style and Application: Divorce Yourself from Your Product.

Jim Trudeau, Computer Programmer Analyst:

"**Your ability to write and speak clearly and precisely means everything.** . . . You are all working very hard at your math and your physics. I hate to be the one to tell you, but they will not help you a whole lot down the road. They won't make or break you on a daily basis. **Your ability to communicate a thought both orally and in written form will determine just how successful you are--will determine your level of survival."**

Writing-to-Learn and Critical Thinking Strategies

Below are a few simple techniques that will help develop and improve your students' critical thinking and writing skills. They can be used effectively with almost any subject. Writing-to-Learn activities are at least as valuable as the traditional formal writing assignments: essays and research papers.

1) **Begin class by writing the "question of the day" on the board**--have students spend four or five minutes becoming engaged with the topic. Or ask students to provide the question of the day based on their reading--or on the last class.

2) **Have students start class by summarizing what the class did last time.** This, at the very least, gets them calmed down and **on task.** But it also requires students to go to the next level of thinking beyond note taking. They must begin to make their own choices and decisions about what is important.

3) Have students write on one of these: **What is the main point of last night's assignment? What are we going to do today? What should we cover today?**
To answer these questions, students must begin to think, to pull out ideas--from their own minds--not mindlessly copy what any tape recorder could provide.

4) **Always write after using film or AV materials.** This works best if you are prepared with study questions to follow the film. If this is not possible, then have students summarize the main point or points of what they have just seen--even if they did take notes. Taking notes is passive--finding the main points requires critical thinking.

5) **Stop in the middle of class and ask students to summarize the class up to now, or predict what is to come in the last half of class, or what is to come tomorrow.**

THE BEST PART OF ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES IS THAT <u>YOU DO NOT GRADE OR EVEN NECESSARILY READ THESE ASSIGNMENTS</u>. YOU DON'T GRADE EVERY READING ASSIGNMENT. WHY SHOULD YOU FEEL COMPELLED TO GRADE EVERY WRITING ASSIGNMENT? <u>THE BENEFIT IS IN THEIR WRITING--NOT IN YOUR READING OR GRADING IT.</u>

WRITING-TO-LEARN ACTIVITIES WILL HELP YOUR STUDENTS THINK MORE DEEPLY, MORE CRITICALLY. (YOU MAY WANT TO HAVE STUDENTS KEEP A SEPARATE NOTEBOOK IN WHICH TO DO THESE IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. YOU CAN COLLECT IT AT SOME POINT AND EVALUATE IT--if you feel this is necessary to motivate your students to give this their best effort.)

Word Processing at MCCC: Observations and Questions

by Dr. John Holladay

The Writing Fellows have been very busy lately. Walk by the LAL sometime. You will almost certainly see several students working one-on-one with each other to master a wide variety of subjects. It's that time of the semester: mid-term, and many writing assignments are due shortly. This is a busy time for students and faculty.

Debbie Waltz, Writing Fellow for the 152 Physics class, describes her experiences with her first set of papers: "The students were great--friendly, receptive, intelligent. I really enjoyed working with them, but never dreamed it would be so time consuming preparing their papers. I think I averaged 45 minutes to an hour for each one. At first I thought I was doing it wrong, but the students seemed to be happy with my work. Some of them were surprised to see their comment sheet typed, but I thought I should: after all, Mr. Spalding was insisting their reports be printed on the computer, so I felt I should print mine too. This is how I critiqued the papers: I read the paper through to grasp the general concepts and organization, only making obvious comments as I read. Then I reread it slowly and wrote down comments (circled or underlined or used question marks) on the paper while at the same time writing notes down about the problems and corrections on a sheet of paper. I reread the paper again: this time matching my notes to the paper as I read to ensure my comments made sense, were accurate, and held a positive tone. I followed this process for all the ones I needed the next day, and then I began to type the notes onto the official comment form. Now I have a copy of the notes I gave to the students for my own records. This physics class is intelligent, and they like to think. What I found really neat was the way three of the students helped me understand their topic. As they explained their concepts to me, they drew pictures--right there on their reports--to illustrate them."

Thanks Debbie. Something very good is taking place here: I wonder how many of us would be willing or able to devote this much time to the learning and writing process.

Another observation: be advised that our Writing Fellows have learned to use the Appleworks word processing programs which are available in the library and in the Learning Assistance Lab. If you have writing assignments, encourage your students to take the time to learn to use the word processing programs. In two hours or less, most students can learn to use Appleworks. After one or two assignments, they will be very comfortable with the program. The ability to use a word processing program will greatly enhance their ability and their willingness to revise and edit their work.

Editorial Question: Writing Fellows are eager to teach other students to use the computers. Many of our faculty are ready and eager to make wider use of computers. In the example above, Professor Spalding requires his papers to be processed on the computer. But MCCC's supply of computers is extremely limited. MCCC has nearly three thousand students, and we have seven computers on campus to which students have open access: two in the library and five in the LAL that can word process. I know at least two committees are now studying the situation, but why are we so far behind most other colleges? How long will this process take? Our students and faculty need computers now!

How to Write a Poem

by Dr. Robert Merkel

Years ago I came to an emotional and philosophical crossroads in my life. I had to decide whether I would be a lambada dancer or the world's first perfect teacher. Luckily (for you) I chose the latter because now I can share with you my recipe for writing a poem. Here then is my secret.

How to Build a Fine Poem

1. Start with an emotional experience. Recollect it in a moment of tranquility.
2. Choose those appropriate words which will help you reconstruct the experience. Use phrases, and clauses too if the words seem right.
3. Arrange your words, phrases, and clauses in a logical order. Don't strain or worry--use your instincts.
4. Add verbs. Polish it. Sleep on it. Change it as you deem appropriate.
5. Format it. How does it look best? Play with various arrangements.
6. Type it.

If it sells, remember it is polite tradition to send most of the profits to your teacher (me), and if it does not--but it is really good--give it to me or to Dr. Holladay for consideration for Images (MCCC's literary arts magazine). The deadline for this year's issue is fast approaching: March 1.

WRITING CENTER IN THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE LAB

Writing Fellows' Hours / Winter 1990

MONDAY

	WF #1	WF #2
9:30-10:30	Julie Frank	
10:00-11:00	Rachael Howen	
11:00-12:00	Rose Matheny	Timothy Hyatt
12:00- 1:00	Timothy Hyatt	Elaine Lemley
12:30- 1:30	Jeff Bock	
1:00- 2:00	Elaine Lemley	Kristin Servey
1:30- 2:30	Grace Dyer	
2:00- 3:00	Kristin Servey	Rachael Beeler
3:00- 4:00	Angela Hall	
4:00- 5:00	Angela Hall	
5:00- 6:00	Joan Heck	
6:00- 7:00	Joan Heck	

TUESDAY

9:30-10:30	Rose Voss		
10:00-11:00	Debbie Waltz		
10:30-11:30	Kristin Leathers		
11:00-12:00	Debbie Waltz		
11:30-12:30	Kristin Leathers	Mark Scherer	
12:00-1:00	Hollie Gonyea	Dawn M. Graves	
12:30-1:30	Eugene Moyer	Michelle Masserant	Janette Stanton
1:30-2:30	Michelle Masserant		
3:00-4:00	Chris Miesvender	Ann Frost	
4:00-5:00	Vivian Walcseeky	Ann Frost	
5:00-6:00	Melissa Steinman		
6:00-7:00	Melissa Steinman		

WEDNESDAY

9:30-10:30	Angela Manwaring	
10:00-11:00	Rachael Howen	
10:30-11:30	Angela Manwaring	
11:00-12:00	Jason Breitner	
11:30-12:30	Robert Gable	
12:00-1:00	Jeff Bock	Jason Breitner
12:30-1:30	Robert Gable	
1:00-2:00	Grace Dyer	
1:30-2:30	Rose Matheny	
2:00-3:00	Rachel Beeler	

THURSDAY

9:30-10:30	Rose Voss	Rebecca Loepke
10:30-11:30	Rebecca Loepke	Sue Vining
11:00-12:00	Eugene Moyer	Vivian Walcseeky
11:30-12:30	Mark Scherer	Sue Vining
12:00-1:00	Hollie Gonyea	Dawn M. Graves
12:30-1:30	Janette Stanton	
12:30-2:30	Edna Flood	
3:00-4:00	Chris Miesvender	

FRIDAY

9:30-10:30	Julie Frank	
10:00-11:00	Steve Sampson	
11:00-12:00	Steve Sampson	Lisa Salisbury

Saturday

9:00-10:00	Dodie Strassulla
10:00-11:00	Dodie Strassulla
11:00-12:00	
12:00-1:00	

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

VOL. II, NO. 6
APRIL 1990

For Your Information

Editor: Dr. John Holladay

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM

Why All Students in a Writing Fellow Course Must Participate in the Process

by John Holladay

In the fall of 1982 at Brown University, Tori Haring-Smith established the first Writing Fellows program in this country. By the fall of 1989, according to a recent article by Haring-Smith, their undergraduate peer tutor program now serves over 2500 students annually. She says that with the help of 80 Writing Fellows at Brown: "Students acquire a crucial skill: the ability to improve their writing by revising it with the help of a colleague."

MCCC's Writing Fellow program is patterned after the one at Brown University. This semester we have 35 Writing Fellows working with over 500 students. Unlike those at Brown, our Writing Fellows also work a combined total of seventy hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL. Here they are available to work with the writing assignments of any student in any course on campus.

One way our program is similar to the one at Brown University is that we want every student in a Writing Fellow class to work through the process by revising the first draft of each paper with the counsel of a Writing Fellow. Tori Haring-Smith says about the Brown program:

"Every paper written by every student in a Writing Fellow course is first submitted to the student's Writing Fellow, who comments on it in writing. The papers with these comments are then returned to the students who must revise them before submitting both versions (the original with the tutor's comments and the revision) to the faculty member in charge of the course. Although students are not required to follow the Writing Fellow's suggestions as they rework their papers, all students in the course must participate and must revise their work. This policy is designed to combat the students' belief that revision is a punishment meted out to poor writers, rather than an integral part of any writing process. The program also demonstrates that all writing (even "passable" writing) can be improved."

This, I am convinced, is the key to a successful Writing Fellows, Writing-to-Learn Program. We all need to work through the process. Writing is an extremely recursive process, and every writer, weak or strong, should come to see revision as an integral part of the writing process. I agree with Haring-Smith. Surely our students, like those at Brown, will benefit from working through the process. Yes, even "passable" writing can be improved, and to be asked to do so must not to be seen as "a punishment meted out to poor writers."

Our students, like those at Brown, are never required to follow the Writing Fellows' suggestions as they rework their papers. Nevertheless, since good writing is almost never a linear process, we will continue to encourage total participation by all students involved in the process across the curriculum. That is the message we wish to deliver with MCCC's Writing Fellows, Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program.

Writing Fellows Write

A Writing Fellow's Pay

by RoseMarie Voss / Writing Fellow: Winter and Fall 1989, Winter 1990

When I was first recommended as a Writing Fellow, I was not really sure I was up to the challenge. I did not consider myself a writer. I was told of all the benefits of being a fellow: prestige, recognition, experience, pay, credibility, and resume dressing. The thought of being paid to take a class was great, and everyone likes to be recognized for something positive and prestigious, but I wondered how anyone readi ıg a resume would understand what a Writing Fellow was since it is a relatively new position. Then I reasoned it would be a great conversational strategy if the interviewer were unfamiliar with this new tutorial role. So I wrote my autobiography, had my interview with Dr. Holladay, and I was accepted.

Later that semester, when the papers started coming in, I wondered if it was all worth it . I had 12 credit hours of school work, a home, two children, a number of community and church committees, as well as throngs of student papers to critique. I worked hard . . . very hard!

But there was something special about that class. It was not just 25 strangers in a room for a couple of hours a day, a few days a week, taking notes and quizzes. It was a group of friends working, learning, and growing together. We shared our fears, struggles, experiences, and achievements with our mentor and each other. Becoming a fellow was by far one of the most important and rewarding decisions I have made.

When we all got together at the end-of-the-semester pot-luck luncheon to receive our checks, Dr. Holladay asked if we would like to continue as fellows for the up-coming semester. Everyone took a moment to reflect on the demanding semester we had just survived. Nevertheless, all fellows who were returning to MCCC also returned as Writing Fellows.

I am now in my third semester as a Writing Fellow, and the rewards are still adding up. This class taught me how to tutor others, gained me prestige among the staff, recognition with other students as a caring helper, experience in working with others, money, and credibility as a knowledgeable student. As far as my concern about whether an interviewer would appreciate what a Writing Fellow is, I found out last week.

I added to my job packet in the Placement Office the Writing Fellows Certificate Dr. Holladay presented to us at the end of the semester . When I went for an interview, the head of the engineering department asked me to tell him a little about myself as he glanced through my credentials. I began to explain my present status in school, and he turned to my Writing Fellows Certificate. He interrupted me and said: "Oh yes, she's the one who is going to write all the reports to the main office for us!" I answered, "I'd be happy to!"

I will not know if I was chosen for the position for a while yet. The important thing is that being a fellow *is* all that it is cracked up to be, delivering all it promised--and then some.

Yes! Being a Writing Fellow definitely pays!

Writing Fellows Write

Where Will I Sit?

by Grace Dyer / Writing Fellow: Winter 1990
A Dramatic Monologue: Thursday, March 15, 1990

As I wait for my appointment to arrive, I look around the LAL. It has become a very busy place. Every table is full with tutors and tutees. Some tables have a sign with the tutor's name displayed. I know these are the Writing Fellows. Even the computers are all being used today. Papers must be due in some classes.

It was never this busy when I first began working here. I started several semesters ago as a chemistry tutor, and I never had a problem finding a place to tutor a student who came for help. If my appointment comes in now, where am I going to sit? I notice some Writing Fellows are sharing a table, and both are tutoring students at the same table.

Someone is sitting at the desk answering the phone and making more appointments. If this keeps up, the college will have to expand the LAL.

I see an instructor tutoring at one table. Students are sitting in the waiting area--patiently waiting to see the tutors with whom they have appointments.

I cannot believe it! The LAL is actually full! Where will I sit when my appointment arrives?

Two students finish their tutoring sessions and leave. Two of the students who have been waiting sign in and move to tables with their tutors.

Guess who just walked in the door--my appointment. Where will I sit? The only places left are the two chairs in the waiting area. I ask the student to sign in, and I ask him to sit in the waiting area. "I will be right with you," I tell him.

Picking up his paper and my written evaluation, I quickly glance around. All the tables are still full.

I guess I will sit in the waiting area and discuss the paper. The session goes well. The student is very receptive. He does not mind at all that we are sitting in the waiting area. He even says he wants to bring his paper back after completing the revisions. I guess it really does not mater where you sit as long as you get the job done.

Assessment of Writing Assignments

The final two pages of this issue include a two-page assessment instrument for writing assignments. If you use writing assignments in any of your courses, you may benefit from knowing more about how well your students understand your assignments. We hope this assessment instrument will give you the opportunity to do just that. If you think these two pages might elicit information you would like to have, please detach these pages and have graphic arts make enough copies for your students.

Professor Jim DeVries suggested we create such an evaluation instrument for classes working with Writing Fellows. We did so this semester. Several faculty members contributed to the version we are now using. The form on pages five and six of this issue has been revised slightly so that it can be used with any class.

This evaluation is for your use and for your eyes only. After your students complete the evaluation, you are free to use the information in any way you choose. You may get some helpful feedback that will allow you to design better assignments in the future. Unless you choose to share the results, no one else will read the evaluations.

See Pages 5 and 6

Writing Policy Statements

If you are preparing course policies for next semester, please consider including one of the writing policy statements distributed to all faculty last month. To your list of choices, we would like to add this revised statement prepared by Professor Robert Leski:

"Your papers will be graded both on careful fulfillment of the assignment and on compositional accuracy. Just as inaccurate facts disrupt communication, so does inaccurate English. Employers and universities will expect you to think and write correctly. Poor writing, misspellings, grammatical errors, lack of thoughtful organization, and pointless slang represent you badly."

Student Assessment of Writing Assignments

Course Name and Number: _____

Assignment #1: _____

Was this assignment clear?

_____ Yes, Very Clear / _____ Okay, in Most Respects / _____ No, Not Very Clear

If you had trouble understanding the assignment, why? What things might be done to make the assignment more easily understood?

Directions should include the following:

_____ more about the intended audience,
_____ more about what documentation is expected,
_____ more about the sources to be used,
_____ more about the organization of the paper,
_____ more about the specific goals of the paper.

What about the length of the paper? Considering the nature of the assignment, was the paper too long, too short, or an appropriate length?

Are the library resources at MCCC adequate for this assignment?

Other ways the assignment might be improved include these:

(If this course had more than one writing assignment, please fill out the other side.)

Course Name and Number: _____

Assignment #2: _____

Was this assignment clear?

_____ Yes, Very Clear / _____ Okay, in Most Respects / _____ No, Not Very Clear

If you had trouble understanding the assignment, why? What things might be done to make the assignment more easily understood?

Directions should include the following:

_____ more about the intended audience,
_____ more about what documentation is expected,
_____ more about the sources to be used,
_____ more about the organization of the paper,
_____ more about the specific goals of the paper.

What about the length of the paper? Considering the nature of the assignment, was the paper too long, too short, or an appropriate length?

Are the library resources at MCCC adequate for this assignment?

Other ways the assignment might be improved include these:

(If this course had more than one writing assignment, please fill out the other side.)

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 2

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Writing Across the Curriculum: "What's In It for Me?"

Pragmatists say we should evaluate deeds, not words, and judge ideas by how they work, rather than by how well they look on paper.

Many sadder-but-wiser people have failed to follow this advice when considering the development of a writing-across-the-curriculum program. They learned the hard way what David Russel's research revealed: "Revival meeting or consciousness-raising efforts, however useful as springboards, cannot sustain interest after founders have gone...WAC must be part of an institution-wide plan with realistic goals and clear steps marked out toward them."

So, you ask, "What's the solution? How do we add writing across the curriculum without becoming composition teachers and burying ourselves in an avalanche of paper grading?"

The simple approach is often the best. I think Monroe County Community College (MCCC) has developed a program that works. And it works for everyone involved: students and faculty.

MCCC had the "useful springboards"—retreats, workshops, seminars. They were interesting and helpful, but not absolutely necessary. These sessions encouraged faculty in the disciplines to develop non-graded, writing-to-learn activities. However, we have taken our WAC approach one important step beyond the workshop stage. When our instructors decide to transform the expressive, exploratory writing activities into transactional, graded writing, we offer them assistance. This, after all, is the part of the process that instructors find most frustrating—evaluating hastily prepared, poorly conceived, last-minute writing.

We have a way to improve the quality of instruction without placing a heavy burden on our faculty. We have no panacea, but we do offer valuable assistance at a crucial point in the writing process.

Writing Fellows Program

MCCC has brought the Writing Fellows program—which began a few years ago at Brown University—to our campus. Here, very briefly, is how it works.

We have an advanced composition class—open to only a few of our best students. These students, good writers before taking the class, spend a semester becoming better writers and becoming writing consultants for their fellow students. These writing fellows work in a writing center—available to all students in all courses on campus—and each is also assigned to work with students in one class across the disciplines. For this assigned class, our writing fellows look at the early drafts of students' themes. They take each paper home, prepare a written commentary, and meet with the student writer to discuss the first draft. After that, the student writer has the opportunity to revise the draft and submit both drafts and the writing fellows' commentary to the instructor. Everyone in the "fellowed" classes must participate.

Last semester our "fellowed" classes included: Nursing Seminar, Political Science, Geometrical Drafting, Engineering Physics, Organic Chemistry, Respiratory Therapy, Logic, Western Philosophy, Basic Music for Classroom Teachers, General Physics, Children's Literature, Speech, Exploring Teaching, Poetry and Drama, Art History, Sociology, and Psychology. The instructors for these classes knew they were getting a second draft that had received the attention of a capable and concerned student tutor. (Instructors for other classes were also encouraged to require students to take first drafts to the Writing Center.) At the end of the year, we surveyed the students and faculty involved with the Writing Fellows Program.

Evaluation: Students With Writing Fellows

More than 97 percent of these students found their work with the writing fellows to be helpful. When you consider that these students were required to do *more* than students might have done in past semesters (write two drafts of each paper and meet with their writing fellows to discuss each), the approval rate is encouraging.

Some of the comments from these surveys are revealing: "I was pleased to find at MCCC the individual attention given to the students." "It helps to get an unbiased opinion of one's work before the professor sees it." "It is helpful to know that I had somewhere to go to get help with questions and problems."

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Evaluation: Faculty Working With Writing Fellows

The faculty were pleased with the work of their writing fellows. Over 80 percent felt the papers they received were better than those submitted in comparable classes without a writing fellow. One faculty member summed it up: "Students are learning to focus on the complexities of the writing process. They are learning not to be content with one draft. More real learning is taking place."

Perhaps most noteworthy of all were the numerous comments by faculty who said they had initiated or expanded their use of writing solely because of the availability of the writing fellows. For example, one faculty member said: "Rarely have I required writing in this course. The two assignments this term were central to the goals of the course. I plan to make these assignments standard from now on. Regular daily writing will increase in all my classes."

Evaluation: Writing Fellows' Experiences

The writing fellows benefit the most—and they know it. Each writing fellow spends two hours a week in the writing center and is also assigned to work with up to 20 students in one course. At the end of the semester, each writing fellow receives a $200 fellowship grant. Frankly, if calculated on an hourly basis, the money is a small incentive. Other major incentives come in the form of academic credentials, campus recognition, and their own eagerness to learn and to help others learn. These students also enjoy working closely with faculty members.

In conclusion, if a faculty member or student on our campus wants to know "What's in it for me?" the answer is this: "We offer something for everyone." Faculty members are pleased that their students get feedback at an important time in the writing process, when it really matters—before a grade ends the process. Faculty are also delighted to know they will not be reading last-minute efforts. And, of course, students are wise enough to know that, even though this does not guarantee success, it does help them write the best paper they are capable of writing.

John Holladay, *Instructor, Humanities & Social Sciences*

For further information, contact the author at Monroe County Community College, 1555 South Raisinville Road, Monroe, MI 48161.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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